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H I N T S,

ON

D I S E A S E S

THAT ARE NOT CURED:

ADDRESS'D

TO THE FACULTY ONLY.

Det ille viam facile, cui venia est opus

SENECA

L O N D O N:

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H I N T S,
O N
D I S E A S E S
THAT ARE NOT CURED, &c.

ALLow me, Gentlemen, to indulge my imagination but for a moment at setting out, and then I will endeavour to reason coolly with you to the last period. He comes in the suspicious guise of all vain Theorists, you will say: grant but his first modest postulatam, and he will take wing, and leave you—where he found you. No such eccentric flights here, believe me: my

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wings were long ago singed in an excursion to the region of Fancy. I was (like the poor moth that flutters round the candle) deceived by false glare, and drop'd—not into the profound abyfs “where hope ne'er comes;” but into the intermediate region of doubt, the purgatory of all such as are too easily captivated with the errors propagated in this nether world. Among the inhabitants of the place, many old acquaintance of our fraternity held distinguished rank. Your own presentiment or sympathy, may figure to you their situation; my attendant dæmon will not suffer me to disclose particulars. Unworthy as I was, my solicitations procured me a speedy delivery. Return, said he, and work out thy salvation by discharging with tenderness, and assiduity, the momentuous duties of thy profession. Reason points the way; but the obstructions are great, and numerous. In pursuing the grand objects of medicine, some skim the surface, others

others sink into the profound, and all contend for trifles. Thus divided, they raise new impediments to each other, the least of which will resist the most strenuous efforts of one man. He may endeavour to rouse attention to the most important objects, on the principles of common sense; he may trace fallacy to its source; and if he is free from prejudice himself, he may undertake to combat with the prejudices of others. The essay is laudable.

I imagine, Gentlemen, that many of you, already convinced, by sad experience, of defects existing somewhere, will be pleased to find that they are not so much in the art itself, as in the mal-administration of the art; and some few perhaps, when they see their errors placed before them in a strong light, will recant and renounce them; should it appear in these, or any future lucubrations,

tions, that the errors are my own, I will most readily.

THERE is not one of us all who hath seen an example of every disease that tortures or deforms the human body : with the common appearance of some diseases every Tyro in the art is familiarly acquainted ; yet all run after novelties. A rare case is related, and commented on with extraordinary minuteness, and the first, and last topic of medical conversation, is a phenomenon, which according to human probability will occur to some one practitioner once in a century. Pray record these cases with your usual accuracy, and more than usual fidelity. But leave their illustration, and application to the Fabricator of Systems—they may serve to secure one of his tottering props from falling before its time.

Curious enquirers into Nature, indeed urge that
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the discussion of rare Cases, tends to throw light on many obscure parts of Physiology, and Pathology. The excuse is plausible; but in truth these curious men amuse themselves with monstrous cases, as they would with monstrous productions in any other department of Nature: we should wait long enough for a perfect system of pathology were we to expect it at their hands: let them amuse themselves however (so it be not de corio humano) while we with UTILITY for our Motto, begin with observations on some of the most prevalent, and fatal diseases. The importance of the Subject, Gentlemen, will secure your attention, and I trust that the justness of my remarks will give me a title to your favour.

About sixty years since was instituted, under the most illustrious and happy auspices; a method which in this short space of time, has preserved the lives of millions, and demonstrated that

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the variolous contagion may be eluded, mitigated, and I had almost said eradicated. This method was copied from the practice of rude Asiatics.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE hath crowned with still more eminent success, the wise precautions taken to avert from us that terror of mankind, the Plague: we can now without any other emotion than pity, contemplate its distant ravages, and seem so secure after a long interval of immunity, that one of melancholy forecast might say, our security borders on remissness, and a neglect of those measures which have proved so salutary.

FEVER still prevails, and when routed under one form, is introduced by Luxury in another: for about the time at which the Plague left us, the tribe of low Fevers began to make a new, and formidable appearance. WILLIS, and many others after him, thought they found the Origin of these
 Fevers

Fevers in the enervating luxury of the Age. Admitting this, or any other cause of Fever, the manner in which it operates is extremely obscure, and questionable; and yet the veriest Sceptic of this sceptical age, will confess that the present method of treating this, as well as the other species of Fever, is more successful than that pursued fifty years since. There can be no doubt that the Cold Regimen, Antimonials, Mercurials, and the Bark, have principally contributed to this happy revolution.

For the first of these we are indebted to SYDENHAM, who thought himself justified in adopting a plan of cure, diametrically opposite to one which ample experience had proved defective. Review his theoretic principles, and you cannot well suppose, that he was determined by any pre-conceived idea, formed of the nature of Fever: no, he had sagacity enough, to see that the hot regimen was wrong; and resolution enough to set about an examination,

examination, whether a cold regimen might not be right. This was a short way, and a good way of coming to a conclusion; and on many occasions, Gentlemen, worthy of imitation.

Antimony, had been long known, before the real value of its active preparations was discovered. BOERRHAAVE surmised that from Mercury, and Antimony, combined, there might be elaborated, a specific for the Small-pox. On what ground he built this surmise, or whether it were not rather a lucky hit of conjecture, I will not pretend to say. But the Man who first employed an Antidote of this kind in Britain, seems to have had no subtle theory in his head; perhaps, the mildness of the Small-Pox, observable in a Patient who had taken a Mercurio-Antimonial, for the cure of another Malady, suggested to him or the real Author of the discovery, the useful hint. Be this as it may, neither he nor BOERRHAAVE himself, could

could see any thing in the nature of the Disease, which pointed out this remedy : mankind might have reasoned on to eternity, about causes and symptoms, had not close analogy, or adventurous experiment, called their attention to facts, and confined them within the limits of modest Theory—The Theory of remedies.

WITH what view was Mercury first employed in the Venereal Disease? surely its first patrons were not men disposed to speculation : their practice was bold even to temerity ; and all the medicaments they employ'd, were the new, and powerful arcana of Chymistry.

INTERMITTENT Fevers were often attended with fatal consequences, before the discovery of Peruvian Bark ; and even after its introduction, the evils resulting from improper exhibition rendering it suspected, it might have lain by neglect-

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ed to this day, had not some members of the Faculty wiser than the rest, judiciously argued, that a Medicine of efficacy deserved another, and a fairer trial.

THESE summary remarks, Gentlemen, are intended to remind you, that some of the most grievous diseases that ever afflicted the human race, have been found capable of cure, or of prevention—that general rules of prevention have been productive of signal advantage—that in diseases, which because they resisted the usual mode of treatment, were therefore deemed incurable, adventurous experiment has been successfully opposed to specious reasoning: that potent remedies ought not to be discarded hastily, tho' untoward circumstances do sometimes follow their use; for on the whole it appears, that from the admission of potent remedies, and consequent reasoning on their effects, Medicine has received its principal improvement.

THESE

These reflections contain some comfortable truths, which if they make any impression, will encourage you to take a cursory view of some other diseases, still very formidable.

I see Phthisis, spectre-like stalking in the van, and limping Gout, bringing up the rear. To enumerate the individuals of the group, might wound your recollection—let us select those two diseases—of very different species indeed; but similar in some few respects, inasmuch as their first access is for the most part posterior to the age of puberty; their distinctive characters are pretty clearly developed, and the progress of neither of them is so rapid, as to prevent our trying the full effect of various remedies. Alas! we have no remedies, and you have made an injudicious choice of subjects, which promise neither credit to yourself, nor emolument to others; the one disease baffles all our efforts, and to cure the other, is an attempt

attempt so hazardous, that we think ourselves warranted in passing the same sentence on both.

THESE, if we may judge from appearances, are the sentiments of learned men. At a period which teems with valuable treatises, on almost every other disease; and when we are threatened with an inundation of simple facts from every quarter, the number of volumes on pulmonary phthisis begins to diminish, and the gouty patient is left to tell his own story.

THIS egregious inconsistency seems to imply that we have exhausted the subject, and attained the *ne plus ultra* of investigation; whereas, in reality, the neglect of two diseases which demand a more than ordinary attention, is the unhappy consequence of prejudice and despondence. In any case, Gentlemen, despondence on your side, begets despair on the side of your patient, and then your reputation against his life is at stake.

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WERE a second SYDENHAM to arise, and cast his eye on our enormous registers of mortality, he would have cause to lament the ravages of our insular plague, in the same doleful strain as the first. Some have intimated a doubt, whether confirm'd phthisis was ever yet cured. If the question be, whether the medicines in common repute have ever yet cured it, I will undertake to answer it in the negative. The present most general mode of practice was adopted, in consequence of a supposed analogy between the effects of the same remedies, in external and internal ulcers: the analogy has been long since proved a false one, and yet many of the profession, rather than acknowledge the venial error, persevere in the same course, against the conviction of sense and reason. Harsh as this sentence may sound in some ears, men of unbiaſed and mature reflection, have before me observed, and lamented the blind, and positive attachment of many an old practi-

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oner to tenets anciently, or generally espoused, and his obstinate aversion to every overture at reformation: protected from censure, by a thick phalanx of dotards, who keep him company, he stumbles on perpetually in one track, from which he counts it heresy to deviate, and his experience is not worth a straw, for he either cannot, or will not see, that if his medicines do any thing, they do hurt. When men who have the best opportunities of correcting what is amiss in practice, wilfully deceive themselves in this manner, we cannot wonder that diseases, in themselves dangerous, are become almost universally fatal.

In internal as well as external ulcers, the power of the constitution, may for ought we know, effect a restoration with very little assistance; and to this power we must refer the favourable events, which now and then surprize us; for the most memorable instances of recovery are those in which
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the patient shifts his abode, and takes his final leave of the Doctor. These instances, it must be owned, are not directly in point, as we are not assured that they were genuine cases of confirmed Phthisis. To avoid this source of fallacy in future, it is to be hoped that the Chymical test of purulent Sputum, will come into general use, and if it shall be found that Patients sometimes recover after a purulent spitting has taken place in any considerable degree; then some, at least, of the suspected cases on record, may be admitted as evidence in my favour; for, as they will shew that a confirmed Phthisis is more readily susceptible of cure, than is commonly imagined; they will afford a presumptive argument, that the languid efforts of Nature have availed more than medical prescription. But this is begging the question unnecessarily, for some of those very practitioners, of whom I am complaining, consider the disease as curable; but mark the procedure
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of one of these adepts. If forty-nine of his Patients die successively, he exclaims against the fatality of the disease; if the fiftieth happily survive the same treatment, he plumes himself with all the honour; his remedies rise in his estimation in proportion as their coincidence with a cure is more rare, and beneficent Nature is all the while o'er-looked and vilified.

Are we then to leave the poor consumptive patient entirely to those resources of the system which we term Nature? By no means; for tho' they are sometimes powerful, they are too often insufficient; but, with a view to determine in what way we can render him most essential service, we might suspend for a little while the use of all Medicines, excepting only those which evidently palliate the most urgent symptoms; and bestow the most wary attention to regimen, and particularly to the state of Air, which seems best suited to the
vitiating

vitiated organs of respiration. This conduct, tho' it be merely palliative, promises two very important advantages : it will enable us to decide on the merits of the present practice, and give us a fair chance of discovering the most eligible remedies. I will not venture to assert, that all such as have been employed hitherto are useless, or improper, nor will I pretend to offer others in their stead ; but with truth and justice may remark, that in similar cases, nay in one and the same case, the treatment has been so inconsistent, that a young man cannot possibly know on what plan to proceed rationally ; and an old man would be puzzled, to tell which of his common Anti-phthific Medicines had done most harm. At one time, a Patient is reduced so low by Venesection, as to afford the meddling Housewife a pretence for giving Cordials, if perchance the favourite Balsamic has not done its duty: at another time he is drenched with compositions of pectoral, or

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vulnerary Herbs, of which there is scarce one whose qualities are to this day properly ascertained. Oils, Mucilages, Acids, Tonics, and finally Bristol water, compleat the farrago. Now let the experienced practitioner say, whether he would think himself in danger of losing the credit of one cure, by exploding them altogether in the gross. If the answer be affirmative, let him point out those particular ones, whose loss he would regret: if these are of the palliative kind, I leave them with him 'till he can find better; if they are of an active quality, and intended to something more than palliate, he would do well to produce an instance in which they have clearly of themselves wrought a cure. If he be at a loss here, then his method may be pronounced faulty, and his Medicines incongruous.

When I recommend a mode of treatment confessedly palliative, it is with an immediate view to
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reducing the practice to as great a simplicity as possible, in order that we may be able to discriminate the effect of every application: this we cannot do, while such a complicated variety of medicaments, under the loose denomination of Balsamics, are given in every circumstance of the disease, without distinction.

There are considerate Physicians, who have amended their own practice in this respect, and lain down excellent rules for the observation of others; but it is a melancholy reflection, that not one in ten of the lower class of people, receive any benefit from their essays. These poor people not aware of the tendency of a Winter cough, defer making application for medical assistance, until the malady is too deeply rooted to be removed. With this consequence, Gentlemen, you are not directly chargeable; but your credit, and humanity, are concerned in their cause. It is my business

ness not only to plead their cause, but to propose to your consideration, some feasible plan for their relief.

The case of Phthifical Patients in and about this City is singularly deplorable. They are improper subjects of hospital practice, because even the vicinity of a hospital is baneful to them; and for this good reason they are excluded from a situation, which is beyond all others favourable to circumspect, and extensive observation. At the same time the medicinal springs of Bristol, or any others of a like nature, are too remote and confined in their application, to compensate this unhappy inconvenience. Might not some means be devised to render these more generally useful? If their restorative virtues be in any degree answerable to the encomiums bestowed on them in particular cases, this question is of some importance: as such I leave it to the consideration of the Gentlemen

tllemen, who practice at those places, observing only by the way, that the simple course of Medicine, pursued by Patients while they are drinking the waters, is one, and not the least advantage resulting from their use. I am supposing that the water has the principal share in producing a good effect; but many are disposed to attribute all to change of air, and situation. How far either, or all are concerned, may be determined by an experiment, which constitutes part of a Plan for the relief of poor, consumptive patients in and about this metropolis.

Let two, or more houses be provided at suitable distances from town, (perhaps the distance ought to be greater—not less than twelve miles) at any rate in a dry, airy, but not very exposed situation. The number of houses must depend on future contingencies; but more than one seems necessary to avoid crowding the patients, and to enable the ob-

server to form a judgment of air, and situation. If one of them were situated near the Sea, it would afford the probable advantage of Sea air, and an opportunity of sailing—an exercise so highly extolled, that we have some reason to think on this confined scale, it might prove no despicable auxiliary. The relative situation of a Lime-kiln, or any manufactory which occasions copious exhalations, may determine the choice of other receptacles. Let each of them be spacious; yet never contain more patients, than one Physician, and one Apothecary may well take the charge of: the former should attend at least three times a week, and keep an exact register of every case that falls under his inspection. His sagacity must direct him further; but he will, I believe, see the propriety of proceeding on the plan of simple, and cautious medicinal treatment already recommended. He will first apply himself to learn the best regimen, and how far it alone may be relied on; and when
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he shall have occasion to call in remedies to his aid, he will give them one by one a fair trial, and thus he will be able to assign to each its respective degree of merit.

It is enough for me to sketch the out-lines of a plan which must be left for others to correct, and finish: yet, in order to render it more certainly useful, and comprehensive, suppose a code of rules for the treatment of a recent Cough were published, with the sanction of the College; containing such plain directions as the common people might easily apply, and enforced with such considerations as might make them more attentive, and careful of themselves in the first stage of the disease. This measure independent of any other, seems calculated to save many useful members of the community, from falling a prey to its insidious approaches. As a previous step to other measures, it seems to have this further recommendation—it will obviate

viate any imputation which might light on practitioners, were they to enter on a new, and experimental method, before they have satisfied themselves that the means of prevention are ineffectual.

The Gout is considered as another desperate disease. Whether it deserves this mortifying epithet, may be worth a moment's enquiry. I have already hinted the impropriety of considering any case of disease as desperate ; and that hint flowing from the most enlarged principle of benevolence, must meet with approbation from the best men, and best judges, and would seem to preclude the necessity of this enquiry ; but the circumstances of gouty patients are such, that practitioners of the most benevolent disposition, do not regard them with that compassion which they feel for others. The Faculty hath given up the care of the gouty patient, during his paroxysm, wholly to nurses, and speculating at a distance, have reasoned themselves

selves into a belief, that the disease after having made its appearance once or twice, is necessary to the constitution. Hence it has happened that very few are conversant with its miseries, until they themselves become the subjects of it. By this time the terrors inculcated by books co-operating with their own natural apprehension of danger, exclude every idea of effectual assistance.

PATHOLOGY indeed presents us with many difficulties. The old controverted question, whether it were this, or that distemper of the fluids, instead of clearing up the matter, hath involved it in still greater intricacy; for it is now shrewdly suspected, that whatever sensible qualities predominate in the fluids, the cause of morbid excess in them is derived from a higher source; and the question now is, whether the Gout be originally a disease of the solids, or fluids.

THIS retrograde Theory, has misled us quite out
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of our way : indeed, so far are the moderns from having made any real proficiency, that they have been losing ground for centuries ; and now, ashamed to face a disease, which their own trifling conduct in a great measure has made opprobrious, they inveigh against every man, who dares to make a stand and oppose it, as guilty of Empiricism, and Temerity. In such a cause truly the title of Empiric is a flattering mark of distinction ; to Empiricism we owe our best remedies : from the Empirics of old Rome, we learnt that the Gout is curable ; and I presume that, if ever an eligible mode of vigorous practice shall be adopted, it will be the work of rational Empiricism.

This age is not more remarkable for a spirit of experimental investigation in some points, than for an unbounded licentiousness in framing Hypotheses on others. These dissimilar traits beginning at the same auspicious era of free enquiry,

ty, are very evident in the complexion of modern Philosophy. In some branches they are agreeably blended. The Physiology of the human body, considered abstractedly as the study of the most complex subject in nature, is allowed to set off experiment with loose and extravagant conjectures : considered in relation to Medicine, these decorations are cumbersome, impertinent, and unbecoming ; for, tho' Medicine be conjectural, yet it is also an art consisting of certain rules, and maxims, which are established on facts orderly arrang'd, and digested into system ; therefore, every conjecture that arises not from actual observation, or refers not to actual experience, is foreign to its purpose ; nay further, it retards the advancement of real knowledge, by perplexing the judgment, and preventing the application of those practical rules, which the art is already possessed of.

Of this truth the Gout is a notable instance.

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The conjectures which have been raised to account for its phenomena, and explain its nature, as they took their rise in the imagination, so they never were, and never could be verified by experience. They have diverted the attention of mankind from the proper object, and left a bias on the mind, which it is perhaps more difficult to remove than the disease itself.

To the free admission of such delusive reasoning, in the first instance, I am charitably disposed to ascribe your desertion of the afflicted, and your backwardness in adopting such measures, as a recollection of the many late improvements in medicine would seem to dictate. The vulgar plea, that the Gout is a disease of a singular character, untractable, and hardly curable with safety, is a paltry excuse for doing nothing: but the difficulties—the complicated difficulties! Several other maladies, had once as ugly features; but never

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one so frightful. What are the discouraging circumstances? It is not certain whether it be a disease of the solids, or the fluids. This is rather a specious than a solid argument; for there are in rerum natura, antidotes adequate to the correction of a vice in either. Mercury is said to act immediately on the fluids—Peruvian Bark on the solids. This Theory of their respective action indeed may be disputed; but it is certain that the fomes morbi is then only active, when the body is disposed to be affected by it; and if we can find a remedy, which will fortify the system against its operation, we are virtually possessed of a sovereign antidote. That we have many simples, which have a power of affecting the solids, is notorious. But perhaps it is a disease of the Constitution. This objection, formidable as it is, we would also attempt to obviate. By Constitution may be understood hereditary predisposition, custom formed on habit, or a peculiar temperament.

The first I am afraid we must admit, notwithstanding what has been lately advanced to weaken your belief of its influence. It seems to be agreed on all hands, that the male offspring of gouty parents are predisposed to gout; and as this is a point open to all, and to be determined only by very general observation, we subscribe with deference to the opinion of so great a majority: moreover it is probable that this predisposition, is in many instances so strong as to produce the disease at first, without the concurrence of an immediately exciting cause from without: yet the same is true of other parental maladies, to which the "rules of art and method are applied," and sometimes with success. On the other hand it will be acknowledged, that an occasional cause is often necessary to give effect to the *feminium*. If Gentlemen had collected, and compared the facts which relate to gout, with half the industry that is shewn in subjects of infinite less importance,

tance, they would ere this time have established some criterion, whereby to distinguish when, and in what degree of force the *feminium* exists in the system; or if it be totally dormant, methinks it would be some satisfaction to know, what those several circumstances are of the progenitor, or progeny, which contribute to the disease. These topics have the appearance of *difficiles nugæ*; but they ought in my opinion to be objects of serious discussion to the parent, and practitioner; for whatever be the original cause—wherever its seat, it is certainly a disease of Habit: hence the idea of its being necessary to the constitution—hence the opinion that it is a disease of temperament.

In reasoning on a subject so obscure as that of Temperament, a medical Philosopher should be extremely cautious how he forms any conclusions which may tend to influence practice. Seeing how many adult men, how few at any earlier period,

riod of life are affected with the disease, he may fairly infer, that it is some-how connected with a certain Temperament; but, if he infers that Temperament as a cause is necessarily connected with the disease, he is guilty of rash assumption; which vended under the specious name of Theory, might impose on the many, and increase the number of timid practitioners: for who would be so hardy as to attempt a total change of every fibre in the body, or set himself in direct opposition to Nature, while she marks with indelible characters the stages of our journey from the cradle to the grave?

The opinion last alluded to, supposes hereditary predisposition, and excludes the consideration of morbid matter: so far it is consistent with observation, and sound Philosophy; but by attributing so much to Temperament, it is exposed to insuperable difficulties; for either is meant the pure melancholic Temperament, or the same Temperament

perament qualified by some peculiar modification. It is not the former, because it constantly supervenes in a greater, or less degree at the decline of life; and laborious people, who are obnoxious to it in the greatest degree, are farthest removed from any danger of the disease. We must reject the latter for want of sufficient evidence, there being no peculiar marks observable in gouty temperament, whereon to found a diagnosis in ambiguous cases; and because it is highly probable that the gouty temperament, is nothing more than the temperament of old age, prematurely induced or aggravated by repeated attacks of the disease. The original cause (whatever it be) receives new force from habit, and habit constitutes the gouty diathesis.

THERE are other diseases of a periodic, or intermittent type, which if left to themselves become habitual, and at length irregular as to the time of their recurrence. The analogy between
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them, and Gout, is not so remote as may be imagined. The Gout is primarily an affection of the system : its paroxysms are preceded by spasm, and accompanied with a febrile commotion. The essential difference seems to consist in these two particulars : neither of them do so certainly derive their origin from hereditary predisposition—neither of them is attended with topical inflammation. I might add, that neither of them is so apt to induce the melancholic temperament ; but this circumstance seems to deserve no farther notice in a practical view, than as it may excite endeavours to preserve our fellow-creatures from a calamity, which even time cannot alleviate.

Attention to every circumstance, which precedes the first invasion has been recommended : let me now add, that if the characters of hereditary predisposition should elude investigation, there are still very reasonable grounds of hope, that the
recurrence

recurrence of paroxysms may be prevented, if vigorous applications be made to the system, before the habit of disease is confirmed : and happily at this early period we have full scope for the use of every remedy, which bids fair either to prevent or remove them.

Those who have been accustomed to think that topical inflammation is the most salutary, because the most natural expedient of relief, reprobate all attempts to mitigate the pain with which it is inseparably connected ; not considering that the efforts of Nature want regulation in all other diseases, and that in this, where they never succeed compleatly, they may require somewhat more. Patients less opulent, or less prudent than others, have on many occasions repelled the inflammation, and thus counteracted the natural method of cure with impunity : and in recent cases more particularly, repulsion seems least hazardous. I do not however advise this step, but would only insinuate that the
inflammation

inflammation being more in our power, we might perhaps repel it safely, if other remedies should be found ineffectual.

That some remedy will be found, I hope, and believe: in the mean time, Gentlemen, it is your duty to attend with more circumspection, and assiduity on those forlorn arthritics, whom you now leave to be the dupes of every ignorant pretender. You well know that the first access, instead of being an earnest of fourscore, is an almost infallible presage of premature death. There are instances enough on record, to convince you that it may be prevented, and by seasonable assistance cured: Neglected it becomes habitual, and perhaps so necessary to the constitution, that you may have reason to congratulate the patient, and yourselves, if on certain occasions you can add to the vehemence of the paroxysm, because it indicates some remains of vigour: and, according
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to the old aphorism, absorbs the sense of other ailments: yet what is the point gained. Every smart fit is a severe trial of the powers of nature: they must now sink fast in so unequal a conflict; the complaints which lately ceded to the regular paroxysm, will recur and hasten the fatal-happy period.

We have learned societies, eminently distinguished by their attention to well authenticated facts, and diligent investigation of remedies: it may be in their power, (I am sure it is not inconsistent with their plan) to promote an emulation, from which the most beneficial consequences might be expected. Their example, and authority in medicine, would prompt individuals, who are now justly apprehensive on the score of reputation.

Might I again presume to dictate—the books
which make mention of anti-arthritic medicines,
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should be consulted. The substances which have been at one time or other recommended, are various : let all such as are not absurd, or evidently insignificant, be disposed into classes according to their sensible qualities, or known effects, to the end that they may be more readily selected for use : if it be found that any of them, tho' efficacious in respect of the disease, are productive of ill effects, perhaps we may learn by due regulation of their dose, by the admixture of some corrector, or some collateral means to avoid the inconvenience : if those formerly proposed should not after fair trial answer our purpose, why not proceed to more powerful ones of modern date. *Satius est anceps experiri auxilium quam nullum.*

In prosecuting some such method as this, tables will be found useful by giving a concise view of medicines exhibited, with their effects, as also any particular circumstances of the case in which one
or

or other was employed. The succeeding generation may be as much improved by them, as by your meteorological tables—if they be kept with equal accuracy.

It would seem on every account eligible to take the disease at its early appearance, or its regular state, and then we need not embarrass measures by a prolix recital of minute particulars; but taking some one approved history of phenomena (we have many good ones, but SYDENHAM's is as good as any) compare it with the case in question, and leaving out the circumstances common to both, mark those only in which they materially differ from each other. This is a part of method, which, in so diffuse a branch as medicine is, ought always to be adhered to. In our investigation of remedies we cannot be too inquisitive, nor in the relation of their effects too circumstantial and explicit.

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If all our endeavours in the way of medicine prove fruitless, we may find a salvo for our reputation in regimen; but this is a resource to which none but the old, and decrepid, will betake themselves.

The propriety of avoiding all obvious exciting causes, is unquestionable; but an accurate uniformity of regimen—such as may supersede the use of medicines, seems to be impracticable in many cases, and improper in all.

The men we have to deal with, are choice spirits, of warm passions,—high relish for convivial enjoyment, and too impatient of restraint, to submit to medical discipline for a long time on any penalty: or, if we meet with subjects more obsequious, we cannot always draw our line of conduct so nicely as to avoid the danger of debilitating the man, instead of the disease: and further,

ther, the mischiefs that have often happened after a slight deviation from a severe course once entered upon, shew that it is not to be entered on without serious hesitation. These facts point at another curious effect of habit, which deserves illustration.

That our delicately framed system might not be injured, by the vicissitudes to which (in the common course of things) it is every moment exposed, it is endowed with a power which operates constantly towards its preservation. The influence of this power is more or less extensive in proportion, as the occasions of its exertion have been more or less frequent : with those who begin early to inure themselves to change, and expose themselves unguardedly to the agency of physical causes, its energy is improved into habit. Between the extremes of improveable power, and acquired habit, is the extensive latitude of health;

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but the nearer a man approaches to the latter, the nearer he is to stable health, and full enjoyment. Proceeding thro' the intermediate degrees, different men will be distinguished by different degrees of sensibility and strength.

The operation, and influence of this power is well known; but its regular progression towards habit, and the effects of this habit in health, and in disease, have not been sufficiently attended to, tho' it presents an ample field of speculation to the moral Philosopher as well as Physiologist.

I shall content myself with observing, that when from want of energy in this power, or from the prevalence of a morbid cause, disorder is introduced into the system, even then its irregular efforts, dignified by another name, have for the most part a beneficial tendency. It is more to our present purpose, to observe that this power may be diminished, as well as increased, and this in

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two ways ; both equally tending to defeat the benevolent design with which it was imparted. The man of methodical abstemiousness, by avoiding all occasions of its exertion, contracts—the voluptuary, by plunging into the gulph of excess, breaks through the limits of health, and both pay an equal forfeit for their indiscretion: the former comes to loath the food which used to gratify him, and the latter transformed into a skeleton, feels a pestilence in the softest breeze. This comparison of the Methodist with the Sensualist, may seem injurious to the former: it is nevertheless true, that a great number of worthy, and otherwise sensible men, have destroyed themselves by abstinence. They have, or fancy they have, a tender constitution; and to prevent its being ruffled by inclement air, unwholesome diet, or a trifling excess in any of the other non-naturals, they sequester themselves from the world, and study the art of preserving health: persevering in it with anxious solicitude, they

they debar themselves of every innocent enjoyment, and render their life as uncomfortable to themselves as it is unprofitable to others. The habit of sufferance thus weakened, the slightest cause of disease is sufficient to overpower it, and put a period to so miserable a state of existence.

THIS species of fatuity has been in many cases brought on, or aggravated, by the writings of some of our profession, whose great names imposed on men, but too prone to idle speculation; and as long as Physicians continue to address the public at large, on subjects so vague and indeterminate, so long the same fatal mistakes are to be apprehended. Every one should be left to determine what temperance is, by his own experience: if he will not attend to this faithful monitor, he will never be the better for our advice, until he is obliged to call in our assistance, and then the habit of sufferance is suspended; the system is susceptible of every change,

change, and an accurate observance of regimen, is indispensably necessary. It is generally allowed that the excellence of a practitioner, is not in any thing more conspicuous than in his knowledge of dietetic, and justly ; because it is the most delicate, and important part of his province : and, if his injunctions be not explicit, and his visits very frequently repeated to see them complied with, the obstinacy of the nurses, or some unforeseen circumstance in the disease, will render every measure abortive.

If then so many difficulties occur in regulating for a few days only, the diet of a sick patient under our more immediate inspection, how are we to surmount the obstacles of a course which must be continued for years ?

A low diet of milk and vegetables, on account of its simplicity, seems less exceptionable in this
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respect; but indeed the right management of it requires so much caution, and judgment, that medical men only, who are thoroughly persuaded of its efficacy, and safety, and who have some considerable remains of mental, as well as bodily firmness, should enter on a course which they alone are qualified to conduct.

My principles, Gentlemen, would induce me to act a more decisive part, at a season when the prospect is less gloomy, and discouraging. I shall be happy if they receive your approbation, and not displeased if they are found erroneous; for in either case, I shall have the satisfaction of reflecting, that I have done what lay in my power, for the improvement of that profession, of which I am a humble member.

F I N I S.



